

**Woden Valley Community Council**  
**Record of Meeting, Southern Cross Club, Woden**  
**Wednesday 5 April 2017**

- 1 WVCC President, **Fiona Carrick**, welcomed Minister Fitzharris and the other MLA's attending the meeting. She thanked the community for attending the meeting. There were apologies from Jenny Stewart and Timoshenko Aslanides (Committee Members).
- 2 Minutes of the last meeting, held on 1 March 2017, were approved subject to inclusion of the following questions that were omitted from the minutes.
  - a) Are the owners breaching the conditions of their lease? and
  - b) Does the government have the power to compulsorily acquire the buildings if the owners do not act to secure and maintain the property in an acceptable condition?Resolution passed to add the above into the Minutes of last meeting.
- 3 Minister Meegan Fitzharris MLA gave a brief update on the three areas that fall under her responsibility:
  - Health,
  - Transport Canberra and City Services, and
  - Higher Education, Research and Training

Ms Fitzharris acknowledged the presence of other MLA's at the meeting: Bec Cody, Jeremy Hanson, Giulia Jones and Caroline Le Couteur.

She said that every conversation needs to start somewhere and we want to continue a conversation around a whole range of things happening around the city.

**Health** – the Government has made a number of commitments to improve access to health services right across the city including not only access to services but expanding the UC campus, expanding and making best use of services at community health centres which are wonderful facilities now. Also expanding the hospital at the home and more nurse walk centres from Tuggeranong to Belconnen, one in Gungahlin, one in Weston Creek / Molonglo and one in Woden which gets rehabilitation facilities closer to homes. The expansion of Canberra Hospital site is principally expansion of the Centenary Hospital and the building of a new elective emergency surgery facility and improving the emergency service centre. Rehabilitation facilities at the new University of Canberra public hospital site will be opening next year so providing some relief to the pressure faced by Canberra Hospital.

**Transport Canberra and City Services** – the Government is making better paths and roads, is expanding the bus network with the introduction of the Weston line last year plus the plan for two new rapid lines linking Belconnen to Gungahlin and Weston to Civic.

Stage 1 of Light Rail is well underway. The Government has a commitment to Stage 2 to make a 23 km long spine connecting with Woden. It wants to continue the conversation with the public about the alignment connecting Civic to Woden after initial studies for deciding on the preferred route. The studies are in progress now. The Government will then talk to the

community in about 4-6 weeks to get feedback on the alignment options after it crosses the lake at the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge.

**Higher Education, Research and Training** - The Government established a CIT Board in recognition of the fact that the vocational education training sector has changed significantly and there is a lot of competition in the market. The CIT needed to reform itself in order to operate vocational education and training suitable for the public sector institutions and also have the ability to compete in a market which has been opened up by the Commonwealth to provide important vocational training to people whether they are straight out of school, retraining or up-skilling in their professions. The CIT Board made the decision some time ago that CIT Woden campus was not a facility that suits the way CIT teaches its students and is not equipped to deliver TAFE. The Board's early work identified the campus life of a CIT is different to a university. The Board put out early work proposing centres of excellence at its primary campuses of Bruce, Fyshwick and Reid. There will also be a community campus at Tuggeranong and small presence at Gungahlin co-located with the college and the library. The future of the site at Woden is not known at this stage but may have an update from the CIT Board in about 6 months.

**3.1 Question:** A resident from Curtin and member of Pedal Power advised Pedal Power had a huge input into the Master Plan for Woden making excellent suggestions for cycling and walking and were told at the time (2015) that the next step was for this to be incorporated into the Territory Plan to make it a legal document. The Variation to the Territory Plan has come out but there is virtually nothing in it on active travel or cycling. The routes that were defined in the Master Plan for walking and cycling have not been preserved in this document except for one tiny little stretch on the north side of Hindmarsh Drive where the rezone to residential has preserved the cycle/shared path through it. But for the rest of Woden Town Centre there is nothing that would support the idea that the Government is supporting active travel.

**Response:** The Minister acknowledged walking and cycling routes are very important for a whole lot of obvious reasons. There are some good examples like along Easty Street where the Government wants to make town centres walkable and "cycleable". Looking across government the intention is to make active travel a preferred way of travel for short distances. There are active travel principles in the Territory Plan. The Government is committed to make a significant step up in the separation of cycling and walking paths in the town centres and have made it in the Belconnen Town Centre where the planning is more advanced. The Minister is keen to showcase what separated cycle and walking paths would look like around a town centre.

**3.2 Question:** What does the Minister have to say about the present state of the Town Centre especially the graffiti which is on private buildings that the residents of Woden and Weston Creek find offensive? Something should be done about it.

**Response:** The Minister acknowledged this is a hot topic, agreed it looks offensive and it does not look nice. Where it is on public land the Government can act very quickly. But where it is on private land, if the Government is advised it can contact private owners as quickly as possible but the Government cannot be responsible to remove graffiti on private land. The Government is conscious that the private buildings affected are on high profile sites or on busy public roads. One of the ways we have addressed this is having a number of graffiti busting teams where the Government provides some of the equipment. There is also education in

schools and having a small group of artists working with young children diverting their artistic flare to street art instead of defacing public buildings.

**3.3 Question:** A member of the audience asked about the policy around the demolition of Mr Fluffy houses and the impact of noise and dust on the community. There was an extensive range of issues raised in the question so Minister Fitzharris offered to answer the questions privately during the next presentation.

If residents have any particular concerns they should go to the Asbestos Task Force.

- 4 The President ahead of introducing Gary Rake advised the WVCC does support development but also wants to ensure the associated community facilities and open spaces are also incorporated into the Territory Plan to support the population that we will have in the future. She said, ‘we have pride in our homes so want to ensure the right developments are in the right places to facilitate vibrancy and commercial success. We want to have an entertainment area which has been identified as the Woden Town Square. We are concerned that a 16 – 24 storey developments on the northern perimeter of the Town Square will overshadow the Town Square and make it unliveable. We are concerned Woden Town Park has been identified to change to community facilities. We want to keep those open spaces’.
- 5 Gary Rake Deputy Director General Environmental Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) presented the ACT Governments review of the Precinct Codes talking through a series of slides.
  - 344 Woden, and
  - 345 Mawson

**Woden** - The Government has reached the stage of moving the Master Plan into the legislative framework through a draft variation to the Territory Plan.

Some of the key zoning changes proposed include:-

- the change of the Woden Park next to the youth centre to community facilities but note and will discuss further the comments just made by Fiona.
- rezoning of the parking area will be subject to additional heritage studies
- criteria into the rules to minimise overshadowing
- rezoning the Athllon Drive corridor to permit 6 storeys
- to work on more active outward facing frontages within the Town Centre to make safer for pedestrians and awnings for protect from the weather
- existing parking would have to be replaced by the development the parking code will specify rates of parking
- solar access

The EPSDD is also aware that local MLA Chris Steele is proposing a roundtable to help work on the Territory Plan variation. EPSDD will make sure the roundtable is completed before finalising the variation.

## **Mawson -**

Some of the key zoning changes proposed include

- There are two high density residential zones
- There are changes to the business commercial core
- The development along Athllon Drive will permit up to 8 storeys and 6 storeys. The eastern side limit will be kept at 4 storeys
- Existing parking has to be replaced as well as additional parking provided

Examples of the shadows cast by a 3 storey building were explained on a series of slides.

**5.1 Question:** Are there plans for a sunny entertainment area in the Town Centre

Response: Yes there is and another area that is gathering interest is Bradley Street.

**5.2 Question:** Could the roundtable idea be extended to other group centres such as Curtin

Response : Yes, Curtin could possibly go a step better. All representative voices together to bring about an outstanding outcome. EPSDD gave commitment following rejection of the DA to find suitable outcome for the group centre.

**5.3 Question :** How much land is planned for setting aside along Athllon Drive for public housing.

Response: At the moment this is a planning proposal so the first step would be for the Territory Plan variation to proceed to change the planning framework. Then would start to undertake consideration of most appropriate housing stock. It is several years away.

**5.4 Question :** When will the roundtable be held and will there be other representatives involved as well?

Response: Don't have that detail.

**5.5 Question** What are the plans to preserve open green spaces in Woden area?

Response: There is proposal to extend the cemetery into a portion of Eddison Park, the remainder will be preserved as green space. There is a plan along the corridor of Athllon Drive to preserve the public open or green space.

The WVCC President intervened requesting a show hands from the audience about who would like to see the cemetery expanded and who would not. Nobody raised their hand to support the expansion of the cemetery and there was an overwhelming show of hands for the cemetery to not be expanded.

**5.6 Question:** How long will the Alexander and Albemarle buildings remain vacant.

Response : Unfortunately will remain vacant for the foreseeable future. EPSDD is not involved with development of the site. The Commonwealth employment trends have been to centralise offices closer to the parliamentary precinct or moved outside Canberra. There are no current economic proposals to redevelop the site. The Government has had discussions with the Doma Group for redevelopment of the site but cannot comment further.

**5.7 Question** Noting the interest in community sporting facilities it appears the Phillip Pool has disappeared from the map

Response : No, there is a specific rule in the draft Territory Plan that the ice rink and pool are to remain and any development of that site must include enclosing the 50m pool. (Rule 8 item c means development as an indoor facility is not negotiable)

**5.8 Question** : Is it the Government's intention to try and increase the population of Canberra for supporting increased business and social activity? What is the model showing the optimum density should be in the town centre?

Response: Change in composition by region and by housing composition. One of the biggest changes observed in Canberra in last 50 years, house occupancy has reduced from 6 to 2.6 persons per household. This trend has put pressure on the supply of housing. According the particular sizes and standards of apartments proposed EPSD can forecast the population of the town centre is expected to increase by 2,000 persons this year.

**5.9 Question:** Why are the buildings proposed so close and high along Athllon Drive at Mawson.

Response: Mawson is a major transport corridor and the Mawson park and ride is one of the most popular. The development is close to create a corridor effect but the set backs proposed can be discussed further.

- 6 **David Collett** Executive Director of the Public Housing Renewal Taskforce Public Housing Renewal – referred to the set of slides which identifies the sites proposed for new public housing townhouses and apartments in five suburbs in Canberra's south. The sites are in Monash, Holder, Chapman, Mawson and Wright.

Three years ago the decision for Light Rail triggered a review of the large number of public housing along Northbourne Avenue. The taskforce was established to pick up the needs of those expected to relocate and source suitable lands from the Government to develop new homes to house the tenants moved from the public housing flats. The developments are to match the housing surrounding it and be of a quality equal or better. The new homes will also take tenants from the Red Hill flats about to be demolished and the public housing waiting list.

The site marked for public housing in Mawson is the empty Community Facilities site located between Shackleton Circuit and Mawson Drive opposite the Shri Vishnu Shiva temple and intersection with Ainsworth Street. It will accommodate 13 townhouse units. A total of 141 units are proposed across the five suburbs.

For more details go to home page : [www.act.gov.au/housingrenewal](http://www.act.gov.au/housingrenewal) or [www.publichousingmawson.eventbrite.com.au](http://www.publichousingmawson.eventbrite.com.au)

**6.1 Question:** The proposed development will take away the green space, why wasn't the Mawson Community consulted?

Response: The six sites identified are all on community facility sites, none are on open space.

**6.2 Question from the Mawson Citizen Group:** Page 27 of the Act by the community facilities assessment 2004 states that it is critical that strategies are formulated to avoid ongoing loss of community facility land to other purposes such as residential use. Why wasn't the

Mawson community consulted on how our parcel of land could be used to benefit the many rather than the few?

Response: There was a significant amount of work done to identify all the sites. Supportive housing is an allowable use and after discussing with the planners can move forward with the proposal.

**6.3 Question:** Will there still be public access through the site from Shackleton Circuit to Mawson Drive will some open space set within that area aside?

Response : Yes and yes, the Taskforce is conscious there is strong desire to maintain access along the path. Instructions to the architects to develop the site has been to maintain that access.

**6.4 Question:** What proportion of funds collected from the sale of the public land along Northbourne Ave will go toward reinvesting in public housing across the city?

Response : The Government's commitment to redeveloping public housing is that the number of units that are offered for redevelopment as part of the renewal will be replicated. The Taskforce is appropriated with funding to build the full 1288 units lost through the redevelopment process. There will be no net reduction in public housing through the Task Force activities.

At this stage the Taskforce is not aware of what the revenue will be from all of the units that are going to be developed. If revenue exceeds the costs of the program there will be discussion in Cabinet about how those funds will be applied. The Minister for Housing has previously indicated aspirations to increase the stock of public housing in the ACT. Don't know yet until the sales process is complete what the funds will be. But irrespective of the revenue received the same number of public housing properties will be replaced in the program.

6.5 Jeremy Hanson MLA stood responding: Every single cent collected from Northbourne Avenue sales goes into light rail called asset recycling. It has to as a deal made with the Commonwealth Government because there is no public housing going into Northbourne Ave. On the matter of zoning, supportive housing is not generic public housing.

**6.6 Question from ACT Senior Citizens Group:** The public housing proposed here does not meet the objectives of the community facility zoned land. The objective for community facility zoned land is stated in the Territory Plan specifically in the definitions section on Page 25 as the use of land for residential accommodation for persons in need of support as managed by a Territory approved organisation that provides a range of support services such as counselling, domestic assistance and personal care as required. Other than housing for the aged and people with disabilities, how many public housing properties exist today on community facility zoned land? In addition what additional services will be provided to these public housing tenants as required by the definition of supportive housing over and above what all other public housing tenants receive, who are currently living on residential zoned land with no support services?

Response: Do not know the exact number, but will post the answer on the web site. Since the Taskforce was established, 3 developments have been completed already and there are 6 in addition to that. The support provided will be as exactly the same as provided by Housing ACT for their tenants. They provide financial counselling, domestic violence and a range of housekeeping and exterior maintenance support which link to the Territory Plan.

**6.7 Question:** Did the Technical Amendment made in December 2015 change the definition so they can put public housing on community facility sites?

Response: by Gary Rake: No, it did not change the definition of supportive housing it added clear terminology a common use phrase but makes very clear the definition of supportive housing is unchanged and the test remains unchanged.

**6.8 Question:** The site faces the T-junction at Ainsworth Ave with Mason Drive and faces a blind corner on Shackleton Circuit. It is the least accessible site for persons with disability and aged persons. I cannot imagine it as a priority site for that reason for public housing.

Response: The Taskforce will be taking engineering advice about car access to the site as part of the architectural brief and at the drop-in session next Monday will take comments on how the slope on the site is handled.

**6.9 Question:** In terms of the nature of the tenancy of the proposed development, is it supportive housing for disabled and aged people, or is it repositioning tenants from other public housing in the area of Civic and Northbourne Ave because there is a difference? And, how come we (the public) was not informed before the Canberra Times published an article that this was your intention and why is consultation happening after the event instead of before?

Response: The tenants will be a mixture of tenants from properties redeveloped in central Canberra and Northbourne Ave and other tenants from the general housing portfolio. A significant amount of work will be undertaken to match the tenants with the site giving consideration to their future needs and aspirations to give them the best chance to establishing a viable and sustainability tenancy.

On the matter of consultation, the proposal is to put supportive housing on community facilities land. It is allowable use of the Territory Plan and these sites were identified for future development. The Chief Minister has made it clear that the question is not about if public housing is provided in a suburb or not. The Taskforce is genuinely interested in getting the communities advice about the configuration, layout, design of the landscape etc before the development application is lodged and finalise the plans from the architects. The Minister for Housing has asked and the planning authority has agreed to extend the consultation period by an extra 2 weeks instead of the mandatory 3 weeks in order to ensure the community has adequate time for making their comments known.

**6.10 Question:** There is also a proposal in Woden to relocate public housing from Strathgorden Court (at corner Melrose and Hindmarsh Drive opposite the Woden Plaza) and they have to find areas within Woden. I know a site in Chifley had been looked at including traffic studies but the Chief Minister of the day said at the time that there would be no housing on that site whatsoever. Is there a better way to take something away from the community and to give something better back? The LDA did a very good video for building community parks.

Response: At this stage there is no proposal to move forward with replacement public housing on the Chifley site. Strathgorden Court is one of the 13 sites identified for renewal and the Taskforce will be seeking to find alternative accommodation. Referring to a previous slide indicating the spread of housing across the metropolitan area, some tenants have indicated a wide range of preferences some wanting to remain where they are and some to new suburbs.

**6.11 Question:** How do the people being relocated feel about moving and what do they want in the places that they are going to call home in the future?

Response : The public housing tenants share the same aspirations and desires as the rest of the community in the ACT. It is challenging, but the Taskforce is guided by Housing ACT who already work with the tenants. Each tenant is presented with a relocation plan. Some are looking forward to the move, some have good reasons and desires to remain.

**6.12 Question:** What compensation will be provided when the price of my family home next door drops?

Response: Our experience is different, the public housing integrates well with the existing community. The evidence is to the contrary, much of the public housing is concentrated in the inner north and south in suburbs that have the highest property values.

The meeting attendance was 180 (according the count by the Canberra Times report).

The meeting finished 9:38 pm. The next meeting of the WVCC will be on Wednesday 3 May, 2017 at the Canberra Southern Cross Club.

Presentations to be held till next meeting – street art program, Bradley St café precinct, 15 Bowes St and Icon Water.

**Secretary**  
**30 April 2017**

Attachments :

- The two powerpoint presentations by Gary Rake and David Collett are issued with these minutes for reference.